

Hope for the Discouraged and Depressed, Part 4 - Romans 8:12-17 – April 1st, 2012

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series titled; "Hope for the Discouraged and Depressed." I'm really looking forward to what God has for us.
- I say that because of what's unveiled and revealed in the text that's before us, in the sense that we are given the "how" behind the "what" to do.
- Perhaps better said, what we're about to see is the "how" of "hope," in that this is how hope can once again fill my hurting and despairing heart.

1. I'm not obligated (Verses 12-14)

- v12 Paul now offers a description of how it is that we have an obligation, however, it's not to the sinful nature, that we should live according to it.
- v13 He then says, if we live according to the sinful nature, we will die, but if by the Spirit we put to death the misdeeds of the body, we will live.
- v14 Paul then goes on to give us the reason this is so, saying that it is because those of us who are led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God.

- While the Apostle Paul expounds on what it means to be sons of God in the verses that follow, he seems to address a needed prerequisite first.
- What I mean by that is, before we can get our minds around, and hands on, what it means to be sons of God, something needs to be done first.
- Namely, we need to address the matter of the sinful nature and the misdeeds, or transgressions, if you will, of our wretched and fallen bodies.

- In other words, we need to live according to the Spirit, and in so doing mortify, or put to death the misdeeds of our sinful and carnal bodies.
- How do we do that? Actually, it's only by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that we're able to do it, and it's accomplished in a most interesting way.
- Notice how that not only is there now no condemnation, there's also no obligation for those of us who are in Christ, living according to the Spirit.

One commentator said it this way; "We don't owe our sinful nature anything, because that nature is just heading for death. That nature has not given us any benefit for which we ought to thank it and respond by serving its desires. But (by implication) our obligation is by the Spirit to put to death the misdeeds of the body, because this is the path to life."

- I put to death the deeds of the flesh by removing myself from the Devils' condemnation, and releasing myself from the sinful nature's obligation.
- Then, when I'm able, by the Spirit, to do this, it will be evidenced by my being led by the Spirit of God, so much so that I'm now a son of God.
- As we'll see next, this is huge by virtue of how it changes everything as it relates to how I relate to my sinful nature, and how I relate to God.

2. I'm not enslaved (Verses 15-17)

- v15 He says we didn't receive a spirit that makes us a slave again to fear, rather we received the Spirit of sonship by which we cry Abba Father.
- v16 He goes on to tell them that the Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children, or sons and daughters of God, if you prefer.
- v17 As children, we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory.

Galatians 4:1-7 NIV (1) What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. (2) He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. (3) So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. (4) But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, (5) to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. (6) Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." (7) So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

- In Galatians and Romans Paul compares and contrasts being a son with that of being a slave, and make no mistake about it, they knew slavery.
- The Romans had slaves do everything, and it's believed amongst many a Bible teacher that there were six million of them in the Roman Empire.
- These slaves served their masters in a myriad of ways not the least of which was the tutoring of their sons, with whom there were similarities.

- While there were some similarities between the sons and slaves initially, there would not be any eventually, which is why Paul notes them here.
- First and foremost it's important to note how that they were both subject to and under the authority of the Father until the time set by the Father.
- While the son is still immature he's like the slave, subject to the guardians and trustees until that time when he would inherit the Father's estate.

- It's at this juncture we apply this to when we come to Christ; we're adopted as sons going from religion under law, to relationship under grace.
- My relationship as a son with the Father, is nothing like a slave of the father, thus the Spirit of His Son in my heart cries out "Abba, Father."
- So my faith in Christ, and my relationship with Christ, means that I am no longer a slave, but a son, His son, and as such His heir as His son.

- Now, this brings up a question, and it's one for which I ask of myself as well; "What would you rather be, a son, as His heir, or His slave?"
- I'm keenly aware that the question is rhetorical however, if you really think about it, being a slave is what you do, but being a son is who you are.
- The problem is, this is lost in our culture today. In my Arab culture, your identity isn't based on what you do for a living, but who your father is.

- Let me explain; my wife and I have had four children, three of whom are living, and one, our daughter Noelle, who is now with the Lord.
- Of my three living children, two of them are sons, and one is a daughter. Simply put, it's not because of what they did, it's just who they are.
- Our three children did not have to do anything to be called our sons or our daughter. Their mother and I did, but that discussion is complicated.

- As my sons and my daughter, they call me "Baba," which in my native tongue is the Arabic equivalent of Abba, or Papa. That's who I am.
- Because of who I am, their father, and because of who they are, my sons and daughter, they'll be my heirs. Actually they won't inherit anything.
- Now, here's where I'm going with all this; I'm neither obligated nor enslaved to the sinful nature which is how I'm not subject to it's sinful deeds.

- Rather, as His son I'm the rightful heir of my Father's estate. This of course pre-supposes I'm not obligating or enslaving myself to the flesh.
- To do so would be foolishly akin to an heir who would, of his own volition, subject himself to living as the slave under the law of his master.
- It's hard to believe, but this is exactly what the Galatians were doing. The time had fully come; they were redeemed from under the law's debt.

- This begs the question of why would anyone do this? I'm of the belief that it's the pride of wanting to boast in our own fleshly accomplishments.
- Innate within all of us is the notion that if I earn it and slave away in my working for it then I in my pride I get the glory and take the credit for it.
- Conversely; if I receive it, and have not slaved away working for it, then God, in His grace, gets all the glory. My sons can't take any credit for it.
- As His son, as His heir, I'm saved only by grace, through faith, and it's the gift of God, not of works, lest in anyway, in my pride, I should boast!